

**Missouri Completion Academy
Self-Assessment Application
East Central College**

Section I: Completion Goals

If your institution has established a college completion goal, please provide it and explain how it aligns with the following key considerations. If your institution has not yet established a goal, please outline your timeline and strategy for its adoption.

East Central College is concerned about the rate and percentage of student degree and certificate completion and has taken steps over the past several years to address the issue. On July 1, 2012, East Central College appointed Dr. Jon Bauer as college president. Under Dr. Bauer's direction, the administrative team adopted three strategic initiatives – increased Recruitment, Retention and Completion. The CSAO was appointed to chair the Recruitment effort and the CAO was appointed to chair the Retention and Completion efforts. Data were gathered over the 2012-2013 academic year, with a plan to set reasonable and measurable goals for the following academic year through the strategic planning process. An AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program through the Higher Learning Commission) institution, East Central College strengthened its data collection efforts in recent years but help is needed with the process of setting measurable goals with broad based support. The academy is viewed as an opportunity to enable the institution to develop ambitious yet realistic goals, and the emphasis placed on completion by senior administration, including the CEO, positions the college to effectively pursue these goals.

Section II: Common Completion Metrics

Have you completed an analysis of your baseline data and key findings? If so, please share your findings. If not, please indicate your timeline for doing so.

The administrative team has not completed a thorough analysis of the Complete College America (CCA) baseline data and key findings. As we work towards a new strategic plan,

analysis of data will be key to setting new objectives, strategies and goals for recruitment, retention and completion. Throughout the development of the plan, we will be analyzing data supplied by the CCA project, as well as other institutional data. The college currently has a Strategic Plan Steering Committee that will develop the plan over the 2013-2014 academic year.

While analyzing the data, the Committee will look for opportunities for improvement and begin to develop action plans. Specific areas of concern will be declining enrollment, persistence/retention rates, and low completion rates, especially among economically disadvantaged and developmental students.

The college experienced an enrollment surge starting in summer 2009 through spring 2011. As enrollment grew, so did the total number of associates degrees awarded. Associate degrees awarded have increased over 35% in the last 5 years, but the college's certificate production has declined significantly. The reduction in certificates awarded is primarily due to adjustments in the college's certificate offerings. After a review of the certificates, the college reduced the number of certificates offered by eliminating or consolidating certificate options.

Although the total number of associate degrees awarded has increased, the percentage of incoming students completing a degree or certificate within 150% of their program length has declined. Over the last 5 years, the overall percentage of first-time, full-time, degree or certificate seeking students completing a degree or certificate has declined (see chart below).

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
23%	23%	20%	21%	19%

Additionally, students who are completing are taking longer. According to the CCA data, ECC full-time students are taking over 3 years and part-time students are taking over 6 years to complete an associate's degree. This is well above the Missouri average of 2.6 years and 3.6 years, respectively. Students completing a degree or certificate are also taking more credits to complete. On average, ECC full-time students take an additional 8 credits and part time

students take an additional 5 credits to complete an associate's degree. Full-time students completing a certificate are taking an additional 12.5 hours to complete, while ECC part-time students are below the Missouri certificate average.

Section III: Completion Strategies

1. What strategies are you employing or considering to reduce time-to-degree and to accelerate student success?

Numerous strategies to reduce time-to-degree and increase completion rates have been employed. Students are required to declare a program of study by the time they complete 15 credit hours or receive financial aid. The advisement department plans to upgrade the student information system next year for the purpose of requiring graduation/degree plans for all students. Currently, graduation/degree plans are used, but only required for certain financial aid recipients. The upgrade to the student information system would prevent students from enrolling in courses not required in their program, thus aiding in effective advisement and accelerated degree completion.

With few exceptions, students are required to enroll full-time in order to receive scholarships. The college has been the recipient of several grant programs aimed at supporting the adult student population. Through these grants, the college was able to hire retention personnel to provide the additional academic and personal support needed to help students succeed and complete.

All courses required in certificate programs apply to the related associate degree program. Certificates of Specialization require fewer than 30 credit hours; Certificates of Achievement require 30 hours or more; associate degree programs require a minimum of 64 credit hours. ECC also participates in Missouri's core transfer library project, identifying twenty-five core courses, transferable to any public college in the state.

East Central College complies with the statewide articulation agreement and maintains program-to-program articulation agreements with Missouri four-year colleges and universities.

Program articulation credit is granted for career and technical courses taken at selected secondary and career/technical schools. The college also accepts reverse transfer credit from regionally accredited colleges and universities. Acceptance of credit from other institutions is considered on a course by course basis. East Central College is currently developing a reverse transfer program pilot with Missouri S & T University to automatically award students who transfer prior to completing an associate degree, the associate degree as soon as they complete their lower level courses at MO S&T. This would not require any additional coursework from the student, but would add to their credentials and increase the number of completers.

Online and hybrid courses continue to be popular with students but access to technology at home is often be problematic for students. Dual credit courses are offered at most area high schools. Beginning this fall, dual credit courses will be offered at a reduced tuition rate to encourage more secondary students to take advantage of this early start opportunity.

Academic Boot Camp is a free, two day workshop offered to returning learners who have been out of school for five or more years. The program familiarizes prospective students with the college-going process. Transitions is a free, three week course designed to give students a jump start on their education by focusing on basic skills development. Students are administered a placement test at the beginning of the course and retested again after three weeks of intense study and review. The pilot was well-received and the college plans to increase the number of offerings this year. Students who complete the Transitions course receive credit for basic computer skills, English and mathematics and foundation seminar.

2. Describe your institutions efforts to transfer remediation, your approach to reform and timeline for implementation.

Over the past few years, East Central College has employed numerous strategies to transform its approach to remediation, strategies which have addressed student needs related to course delivery, tutoring and support apparatuses, and staffing. ECC offers developmental coursework within mathematics, writing, and reading, and it is committed to exploring multiple pathways

by which students can complete necessary remediation within each discipline. In math, a growing number of sections within the college's developmental math sequence are taught through the Hawkes Learning System, a mastery-based program which uses a computerized modular approach to instruction. Mastery-based instruction and the use of customized learning modules has also influenced ECC's approach to developmental reading and writing. All Reading Comprehension courses currently incorporate a variety of computerized modules keyed to adaptive diagnostic exams. Currently, the college is exploring options to supplement its traditional Intro to Writing courses with customizable computer programs such as Pearson's MyWritingLab. Along with incorporating multiple delivery methods in course offerings, ECC also seeks to accelerate capable students, when possible, directly into gateway courses through the use of summer bridge programs in both math and English.

The college's approach to remedial instruction is supported by The Learning Center, which two years ago was dramatically enlarged and enhanced as part of a major facilities renovation. In addition to offering tutoring services, academic coaching, and study group opportunities to students, The Learning Center houses ECC's testing center and ACCESS lab. Placement data for incoming students is tracked and monitored, and multiple measures are used in placing students into appropriate levels of coursework. The expansion of The Learning Center has allowed the college to more effectively integrate support apparatuses within developmental coursework and pursue innovations in how courses are administered. The clearest example of this has been the creation of a Student Success Learning Community, which integrates a 12-hour developmental course load with mandatory study groups, intrusive advising, and a structured mentoring program for participants. The Transitions program, designed to assist students in the process of moving from the workforce into college life, is also administered through The Learning Center. The instructional component of Transitions shares much in common with the modular approach favored in some of the college's developmental coursework and allows for the embedding of remedial practices within technical certificate programs.

Finally, in July of 2012 ECC demonstrated its long-term commitment to the process of continually evaluating its approach to remedial instruction by hiring a Coordinator of

Developmental Studies. This individual is charged with monitoring the effectiveness of the college's de-centralized developmental coursework and maximizing the institutional support surrounding that coursework. The tracking of data such as successful completion rates for developmental students in their corresponding gateway courses is one important responsibility of evaluating success. Within the next year, the Coordinator of Developmental Studies also intends to embark upon a self-study that will be the first step toward NADE Certification in Developmental Coursework.

3. Certificates often produce incomes that exceed many associate and even some Bachelor's degrees. How does your institution count certificate completions, especially those earned in one year or more at public institutions? Does your institution factor certificates into state completion goals?

Credit bearing certificates are included in the completion data the college submits and are considered a key performance indicator for statewide performance funding.

The college received several grants in the past three years to increase completion rates in health care and manufacturing. These TAACCCT grants were awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor to consortia of community colleges in Missouri, both of which include East Central. The Missouri Health Wins Grant enabled the college to add a Health Information Management degree program at little or no cost to students, with the majority of the courses offered online. Certificates in Certified Nurse Assistant (non-credit), Licensed Practical Nursing (non-credit) and Medication Assistant (credit) were also added with help from the grant. ECC is also one of the institutions participating in the Missouri Manufacturing Wins Grant, which will be used to adapt program offerings in Industrial Engineering Technology, Precision Machining and Welding to upgrade skills and credentials of returning learners while maintaining employment. An Outreach Coordinator has been hired to promote more effective employer linkages for certificate and associate degree technical program graduates. Each career and technical program has received, or is working toward, professional accreditation or licensing.

The College's program review process was developed to regularly and consistently evaluate programs for effectiveness, currency and efficacy. The currency of coursework is evaluated as part of the program review process. With the use of external stakeholders in the program review, the feedback from participants leads to program improvement. In cases of voluntary external program accreditation, these agencies assist the programs in maintaining a high level of effectiveness through the self-study process. Advisory committees also assist program faculty in ensuring a high level of program quality; these stakeholders often provide opportunity for student participation in internships, clinical and professional practice experiences. The development of articulation agreements is another tool to determine course currency; the College investigates, develops and maintains appropriate articulation agreements in keeping with its mission and to assure transferability of coursework. The information gathered as part of the 180-Day Follow-Up survey and a newly developed employer survey are two additional tools used by program faculty to determine program effectiveness.

4. A new American majority of students has emerged: most students today must balance the job they need with the higher education they desire. Has your institution developed new delivery structures to help students better balance work and school?

East Central College has offered late start classes commencing at the completion of the Transitions course to enable students to start on their education without having to wait for the next semester to begin. The college is open to pursue other scheduling options but, to date, has found it difficult to comply with federal financial aid requirements using alternate schedule formats. The TAACCCT grants referenced above have served as a means for the college to explore alternative delivery structures, and the institution is interested in scaling these methods to a broader student population.

Section IV: Commitment to the Completion Agenda

Effective completion strategies are possible only when commitment to improving completion rates is modeled by the highest level administrators and faculty. In this final question, you are asked to list up to eight members of your system or campus team that commit to attend the Missouri Completion Academy. The team must be led by a president or chancellor, chief academic officer or executive vice president. Please submit names and titles on the Missouri Completion Academy Campus Team Roster form.

Dr. Jon Bauer, President

Jean McCann, Vice President, Curriculum and Instruction

Ina Hays, Vice President, Student Development

Bethany Lohden, Director, Institutional Research

Ryan Crider, Developmental Education Coordinator

Marcia Bailey, Registrar

Ellen Aramburu, Learning Center Director